

## INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT SNB-PS Units at Cheb and Hazlov

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1. Headquarters for all SNB-PS units is SNB Unit 9600 at Prague. Commanding Officer of the PS units is Major Duda, who replaced Lt. Col. Kovar at the beginning of June 1950. The latter was released from his post as a result of the resignation of Vlado Clementis as Minister of Foreign Affairs.\*
2. One of the PS headquarters at battalion level is Unit 8194\*\* at Karlovy Vary. This unit is commanded by SNB 1st Lt. Vlcek and was formerly commanded by Staff Capt. Galus, now a major, who has been sent to school. Deputy Commanding Officer is Capt. Hrabak; he was appointed to this position after the Customs Guard of which he was a member had been abolished.
3. Subordinate to the Karlovy Vary headquarters is Company Unit 5204 at Cheb, commanded by 1st Sgt. Krec, a member of the SNB since 1945. He replaced SNB Lt. Strupl who had been released from the service even though he was an ardent Communist. Deputy Commanding Officer is SNB Staff Sgt. Licka. Headquarters are located in the center of the town near Stalingrad Street and next to the prison of the Cheb District National Committee. On the other side of this prison are located the offices of the SNB District Command, the SNB station, the STB and the Criminal Police. The Cheb company has the following platoons:
  - a. Cheb platoon, located in a former almshouse on the highway from Cheb to Muehlbach and adjacent to the firing range used by Infantry Regiment 4515 stationed in Cheb. The platoon has two detached squads. One is located in Muehlbach in a former customhouse near the border, the other in Svaty Kriz on the road leading from Cheb to Wies. These squads with a strength of 20 men each are to be expanded to platoons.
  - b. Platoon at Stary Hroznavov (formerly Stary Kynsperk); it is housed in a mansion in the village.
  - c. Liba platoon, located in the former "Daniel" glove and hosiery factory.

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- d. Hazlov platoon, located on the outskirts of Hazlov. The platoon has a detached squad of 20 men located in the former customs house at Vojtanov (Voitersreuth), about 300 m from the border and adjacent to the new customs office.
4. As of 1 April 1950, all PS platoons of the Cheb company were brought up to strength by reinforcements from the "Security Army" (Bezpecnostni vojsko—BV)\*\*\*. A platoon at full strength consists of a commanding officer, a deputy commanding officer, and 33 men. It is believed that all PS units along the Czech-German border—i.e., from As to Kaplice—have gradually been reinforced by members of the BV. All companies and platoons of the Karlovy Vary battalion have been strengthened by the addition of BV men sent from the training center at Krnov, where a whole battalion of the BV has been trained.
5. The BV was established by the Ministry of National Defense upon suggestion of the Ministry of Interior because it would have been costly to reinforce SNB units with regular SNB troops. Members of the BV are draftees who have been called to serve a military tour of duty and who have been especially selected for SNB training by cadre members of their home garrisons. Military training, as well as practical and theoretical schooling, is directed by SNB instructors. After six months of such training, BV men are assigned to PS units. Of their 800 Kcs monthly pay, they are required to pay 500 Kcs to the SNB mess for food. Regular SNB members pay 1,000 Kcs monthly for food. Shoes and clothing are obtained for the BV men from army supplies. To be distinguishable from regular SNB members, BV men wear a military uniform with red epaulets and no rank. At the end of their two years' duty, they may volunteer for the SNB, and those who are accepted are promoted to the rank of junior sergeant.
6. The PS platoon in Hazlov, which is commanded by Staff Sgt. Mikes, patrols the following areas:
  - a. The village of Hazlov and the railroad station where spot checks are made
  - b. Neuesgruen
  - c. Poustka
  - d. Seeberg
  - e. Vlastislav
  - f. Polna
  - g. Skalka
7. The Vojtanov squad which is detached from the Hazlov platoon and commanded by Jr. Sgt. Stanislav Podeprel is assigned the following areas:
  - a. Novtanov
  - b. Stary Rybnik
  - c. Hagengruen
  - d. Crossroads at Frantiskovy Lazne, As, Vojtanov near Horni Lomany
8. The Hazlov platoon consisting of 32 men operates three 2-man patrols day and night, with duty lasting six or seven hours. In addition a 24-hour guard of two men is posted at the bus station on the Cheb-As highway in Hazlov. The Vojtanov squad maintains two or three patrols of two men each during the day and three patrols of two men each during the night. At both platoon and squad headquarters two men act as supervisors. During the summer two men are assigned

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to guard the station building from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. This was an additional security measure instituted in May 1950 by the Ministry of National Security. At the same time the ministry ordered the building of emplacements in the vicinity of the casernes and the increasing of the height of the wooden fences around the casernes.

9. Members of the PS unit at Hazlov are armed with 9 mm Czech model sub-machine guns having two magazines, one with 40 cartridges and the other with 20. Rifles are no longer used by PS units. For border duty each member carries a sub-machine gun, a cartridge clip with 40 rounds, handcuffs, and searching aids. Pursuant to an order issued in June 1950, the leader of each PS patrol is to carry one hand grenade, Skoda model 34. The Hazlov unit also has four light machine guns, CZ model 36. Each gun has one reserve barrel, adequate spare parts, a tin case holding 12 cartridge clips, each clip having 20 rounds of 7.92 mm ammunition, and a feeder. One of these guns, 10 grenades and one rocket pistol are assigned to the Vojtanov squad.
10. The Hazlov platoon has one Tudor car, three CZ motorcycles, and one Jawa 250 motorcycle. One of the motorcycles is used by the Vojtanov squad.
11. When an illegal entry or escape is believed imminent, the battalion commander, on order of Unit 9600, directs the security measures to be taken. While PS units cover as large a part of the border as possible, members of the SNB, STB and criminal department make spot checks at hotels, railroad stations, crossroads, and important bridges. At the same time the battalion or company commanding officer, with the STB commander at Karlovy Vary, requisitions all available PS cars and organizes them into a patrol for the strategic highway of Cheb-Karlovy Vary. The Hazlov platoon and the Vojtanov squad apprehend at least 12-16 persons each month as they attempt to escape into Germany.
12. Prior to 1 July 1950, call and answer passwords were in use. After that time, number passwords were introduced by order of SNB Unit 9600. Number passwords are issued by the company commanding officer to the platoon commanding officer for a period of a week, and the platoon commanding officer gives these passwords to the patrols before they leave for duty. If the number password is 10, the challenging patrol calls 7 and the other answers 3. Numbers 1 to 20 are used for passwords.
13. On 15 June 1950, the battalion command at Karlovy Vary directed the construction of observation towers in different sections of each platoon location. The Vojtanov squad has two such towers. One is located on the edge of the woods near Vojtanov and about 400 m from the supply dump, and the other on the edge of the woods near the village of Kyselka, facing in the direction of Vildstejn. Such tower, which is used only occasionally for observation and sometimes during the day, is merely a seat installed at the top of a tree and reached by a ladder.
14. The Hazlov PS unit uses the state telephone lines and a field telephone system which has a 10-line switchboard connected with the Hazlov railroad station, the Vojtanov squad, the SNB station in Hazlov, the permanent patrol on the road to Hazlov, the Liba platoon, and the company command at Cheb. The platoon also has at its disposal an American-built W/T transmitter-receiver set which is not now being used. In addition it has two portable voice transmitting-receiving sets.
15. Occasionally, members of the Cheb company carry out "encirclement" (zatahy) maneuvers, which are directed by the battalion commanding officer in the following manner: The company commanding officer orders the assembly of a large number of PS men from various platoons. These men are billeted in tents in forested areas along the border and guard that section for as long as two weeks. In June 1950 about 50 men participated in such a maneuver in the area of the Liba PS platoon. The guarded area extended between Dubina and Selb; from border stone 14 to border stone 18. Shorter "encirclement" maneuvers,

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lasting from seven to eight hours, are also held by the Cheb PS company, usually on Saturday and Sunday. Preparations for such maneuvers are treated as "top secret". Platoon commanding officers are informed six hours in advance, while the other personnel are notified only prior to the beginning of the operation.

16. Recently all members of PS units completed a year of party schooling, having received their instruction since September 1949 by means of monthly booklets. They will be examined for their knowledge of party policy and checked as to reliability, and those who fail are to be placed on probation for two years. All members of the Communist Party are to receive new identity cards.
17. At Vojtanov there is an SNB driver's school, at which instruction is given in the operation of all types of vehicles including light armored cars of the Russian type "Bronevik."
18. STB members have been ordered to use only personal identity cards during duty instead of the service badge. PS units are to arrest any STB man found using a service badge.
19. In the customhouse at Vojtanov, a permanent SNB guard and customs guard inspect personnel and vehicles going to or coming from the Russian Zone of Germany. Pass control is handled by STB member Biskup, a devoted Communist Party member since 1945; he is married and lives in Vildstejn. His assistant is Sgt. Matousek who, although not a member of the STB, is a faithful worker and a devoted Communist. Chief of the Customs Guard is Inspector Siroky and his assistant is Havlicek, also a good Communist. Many Soviet officers pass through Vojtanov to visit Czechoslovakia, and in June 1950 Soviet General Kravcenko accompanied by another officer passed through on his way to Prague. Diplomatic cars cross the border nearly every day.

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\* Comment: It was previously reported [REDACTED] that Col. Kovar was purged in connection with the removal of Clementis.

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\*\* Comment: The Karlovy Vary unit number has been given as 0496 in numerous reports.

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\*\*\* Comment: The Security Army may be identical with the State Defense Guard which is reported to have been reorganized recently for the purpose of assisting the SNB [REDACTED]

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